

## Executive Ethics Board News

**Jan Jutte, Chair**  
**Kelli Hooke, Vice Chair**  
**Shirley Battan, Member**  
**Megan Abel, Member**

November 21, 2023

The Executive Ethics Board (Board) met on Friday, November 17, 2023 for their regular meeting. Board members present were Chair Jan Jutte, Vice Chair Kelli Hooke and Members Shirley Battan and Megan Abel. Others attending included: Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Eric Allen, Assistant Attorney General, Julia Eisentrout, Assistant Attorney General, Ruthann Bryant, Administrative Officer, and Justin Cotte, Investigator. Members of the public also attended.

### **Enforcement**

In lieu of an enforcement hearing, the Board accepted stipulations from:

- **Vel Rajagopal**, former Chief of Information for the Department of Commerce, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by contracting out information services with a company that they were part owner of and did not disclose the relationship to the Department of Commerce. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$30,000.
- **Sheri Burden**, an Administrative Office Assistant 3 with Employment Security Department, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for private benefit or gain. Evidence indicated Sheri Burden used their state issued cell phone and computer for online streaming, Facebook and YouTube and sent over 1,000 text messages that were personal in nature from their state cell phone. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$5,000 with \$2,500 suspended.
- **Andrew Burson**, a Corrections Officer at Monroe Corrections Center with the Department of Corrections, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. Evidence indicated that Andrew Burson conducted a background check on an individual without permission and then emailed the information, including classified documents, to themselves regarding the individual. Andrew Burson also stored personal documents on their state computer and browsed the internet for personal benefit. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$4,000 with \$1,500 suspended.
- **Rachel George**, an Advisor/Recruiter with Central Washington University, agreed that they may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for private benefit and gain. Evidence indicated that Rachel George stored several documents related to their outside business, as well as personal 4-H activities on their state computer. The Board levied a civil penalty of \$500 with \$200 suspended.

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Meeting agendas can be found at [www.ethics.wa.gov](http://www.ethics.wa.gov) under "Meetings."

*The next meeting of the Executive Ethics Board is scheduled for January 12, 2024.*

The Board found Reasonable Cause in EEB Case 2023-015 (Parker), 2023-023 (McMillan), and EEB Case 2023-027 (Keith).

The Board dismissed EEB Case 2023-013 (Sweet) and EEB Case 2023-044 (Parent).

The Board issued a Motion for Default in EEB Case 2022-019 (De La Cruz III).

The Board also reviewed three Executive Director Dismissals in EEB Case 2023-038 (Shaw), EEB Case 2023-041 (Clearman) and EEB Case 2023-045 (Bernier).

**Board Action:**

A. The Board reviewed and approved amendments to Advisory Opinion 02-05 Use of State Facilities to Gamble and Advisory Opinion 23-01 Paid Time to Exercise.

B. The Board reviewed and approved the following policies:

- Ethics – Board of Accountancy
- University Ethics Policy – Washington State University (except for Section 6)
- Compliance with Executive Ethics Act – Washington Transportation Commission

Approved versions of policies are posted on the Board's website at [www.ethics.wa.gov](http://www.ethics.wa.gov).

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